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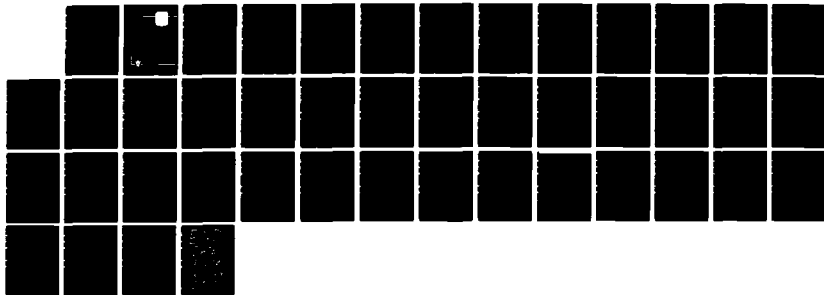
THE MEDITERRANEAN: GEOSTRATEGIC STUDY AND EVALUATION
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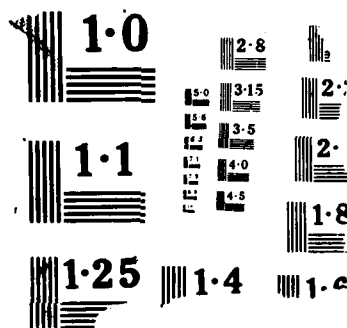
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THE MEDITERRANEAN. GEOSTRATEGIC STUDY AND EVALUATION

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JUAN A. SANCHEZ GARCIA

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THE MEDITERRANEAN. GEOSTRATEGIC STUDY AND EVALUATION

An Individual Study Project
Intended for Publication

by

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U.S. Army War College
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ABSTRACT

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The Mediterranean has been traditionally the scene of the confrontation between East-West. There is a continuous struggle between the United States and USSR to control the waters and the accesses to this interior sea.

But there is an additional factor, due to the tension North-South, that has appeared after the decolonization process of the 1950's.

These facts, the relations of Spain with the Maghreb countries and the other nations in the Mediterranean basin, and the role of Spain as a new NATO member, are the points addressed in this essay.

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SPANISH VIEW

Introduction

The geographical area surrounding the Mediterranean has been the witness of important events throughout history.

This space is the cradle of old cultures and religions, and the main expansion toward the rest of the world began here; for these reasons it has constituted one of the focal points of international conflicts. Today the North-South and East-West confrontations are present in the area, as a factor of imbalance materialized in the presence of the two superpowers.

To West Europe this a very sensitive and crucial area. It corresponds to the south flank of NATO, where any incident can contribute to aggravate the general situation now and in the future. There is a real threat to world peace, because in the Mediterranean flow into each other different factors of possible frictions and confrontations: geographical, religious, ideological, political, economical and military.

As a consequence of the complex historical and political personalities of the Mediterranean countries, it seems useful attempt to establish a relation among all the factors that in one way or another can contribute to a better knowledge and approach to the solution of the various problems existing in the area.

The recent integration of Spain into NATO and in the ECM, can be a factor contributing to equilibrium. Due to its good relations with the Arabs, Spain can be the bridge to link the interests of the north and south communities. Therefore the geographical position of the country dominating both banks of Gibraltar Strait will fill the gap existing so far in that crucial area, reinforcing the western presence with the support of the Spanish Armed Forces, in the way Spain has decided its integration in the Alliance.

Geostrategic Considerations

To make a systematic approach to the area, three different factors must be taken into consideration:

- o Situational or geographic.
- o Sociopolitical.
- o Structural-economic.

The Mediterranean Basin is a geographical zone clearly defined and with a unique personality. Quoting Mr. Fernand Brandel in his book The Mediterranean in the Times of Philip II, "the Mediterranean is a lake that joins more than it separates." But at the same time it is a breaking point, a vacuum, among three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia, linked to the North Atlantic through a point of vital interest from the strategic standpoint: The Gibraltar Strait.

The Mediterranean has an irregular shape, with its larger east-west axis, measuring two thousand nautical miles, from Ceuta to Beirut, and the smaller north-south axis of 600 nautical miles from Trieste to Tripoli (Figure 1). The total maritime surface is about three million square kilometers.

Because of the small size of the water space, surrounded by land and with numerous islands, the mutual influence between sea and land is of capital importance, especially from the air strategy viewpoint. Land-based air forces are able to reach the whole maritime zone of action in reconnaissance and control missions, as well as certain sectors close to the coast in combat missions. But in those targets 200 miles away from the coast and more, the presence of aircraft carriers is necessary.

Generally speaking numerous beaches and very low tides favor amphibious operations.

From the land forces perspective, the plains in the north bank and the desert in the south facilitate the use of armor and mechanized units, with certain constraints. The most important avenue of approach is the Rhone depression, between the Pyrenees and the Alps, constituting the natural penetration from the Mediterranean to the hearth of Central Europe.

The addition of Spain, a huge space in the far rearguard of the Alliance, provides the Theater of War in Europe with outstanding terrain to defend in depth, a chance to stop the enemy at the Pyrenees and a position from which to regain the initiative. More than that, the mountainous geography of Spain is unique for guerrilla warfare. Furthermore, the nature of the coast, with important seaports, the railroad net and the highways linking the interior with Europe, provide to NATO an excellent logistic base, and a reception area for reinforcements coming from CONUS.

Let's analyze the demographic and political factors in the area.

The population on both banks of the Mediterranean is 320 millions inhabitants, from 17 different countries, with an average density of 32 persons/km², Malta (1,120) being the country with the highest and Lybia (2) the smallest. This indicates a very irregular distribution, as is also the case if we note how the population is divided among the Continents: Europe shares 58 percent, Asia 18 percent and Africa 24 percent (Figures 2,3,4).

There are two broad trends in the political realm: those western countries with a democratic-capitalist orientation and those constituted by the socialist oriented countries with a communist-dictatorial system. Eighty-four percent of the total population looks to the west, while the remaining 16 percent are Socialist-Communist.

Another division can be done according to the ideology of each group of countries:

- o Western ideology 209,917,000
- o Arabic oriented 115,185,000
- o Communist oriented 25,975,000¹

The economic factors are the final general considerations to have in mind when studying the geostrategy of the area. Those factors are: Resources and transportation.

The resources with the biggest impact in the economy of these nations are the energy, petroleum and natural gas in Tunisia, Algeria, Lybia and Egypt, and strategic minerals. However, energy resources are asymmetric among the Mediterranean countries: most of the GNP in some of them comes from oil exports (in 1985 40 percent Lybia, 28.6 percent Algeria, 16.5 percent Egypt and 12.3 percent Tunisia), while to others the oil imports are the main import bills in their respective foreign trade (in 1984 Greece 54 percent, Turkey 53 percent, Morocco 47 percent, Spain 46 percent, Italy 32 percent, and France 27 percent). The tendency of oil prices during 1986 and 1987 has supposed a significant reduction in the national deficit of the importers and a decrement in the economic power of the exporters.

To obtain a global vision of the economy in the area, the following division can be established:

- o Industrial countries with a free market economy: Spain, France and Italy.
- o Main oil exporter: Lybia.
- o Countries with medium income:
 - oo Medium low: Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey.
 - oo Medium high: Algeria, Greece, Israel and Yugoslavia.

Another two aspects to consider are per capita income and inflation. The former fluctuating between \$9,760 in France and \$670 in Morocco (1984) and the latter ranging from 0.3 percent in Malta as the lowest and 190 percent in Israel the highest, though the average is a sound five percent.²

However, from the geopolitical and geostrategic perspective, maritime transportation is the most important economic factor.

The Mediterranean has always been and still is more than any other thing a waterway between east and west. In a single day there are in the area more than 2,000 big ships, most of them oil tankers, about 800 navigating and 1,200 in the harbors. Of these 2,000 only 400 are from the Soviet Union or communist countries. The rest of them are from western nations. The data underlines the different geopolitical conditions of the east and west blocks: the first is a land oriented power, the second maritime. This antagonism clearly appears and it is present in the Mediterranean as an historical constant.

The western oriented countries are fully dependent upon the traffic. Spain, Italy, Greek and Turkey depend upon international trade for roughly 90 to 95 percent. Thus free navigation and trade is of vital importance for them. In fact, these states are the genuine representative of the west block in the zone.

Environment

The Mediterranean, with its two components, land and sea, always has been considered as one of the vital spaces on the globe, though its strategic importance slightly decreased after WW II. Its value is a product of the close relationship between the sea and land.

There is a contradiction in the geostrategic interests (dominion of land-dominion of sea). That explains the attitude of the two blocks in their intent to establish a systematic control of the waters (presence of U.S. and USSR fleets) and in the north-south banks (NATO on the north and the Soviet indirect penetration on the south).

The policy of U.S. and USSR in the area deserves a few lines, in order to provide a clear view of relations among the powers and among world regions.

The American policy and the consequent Mediterranean strategy, has been affected for the changes in the military situation of the area. The loss of her role as the dominant power has forced the United States to greater efforts to counter the increasing influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East and North African countries and to confront Soviet naval projection on the sea. Most of the changes are very closely related to the conflict in Afghanistan, the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the war between Iran and Iraq.

The deployment in the Mediterranean of a Soviet naval force, ever more powerful and with constantly improving technology, has influenced the political value of the 6th Fleet as an element of control and power in South Europe. The Soviet presence superimposing and trying to counterbalance the role of the United States ships, has a value that exceeds the pure military capability of such a Soviet force.

The consequences derived from the confrontation of both superpowers in the area have increased the potential danger of a conflict, due to the alignment with one or the other block of the different countries located in the zone. The European governments, on the other hand, know their economic and energetic vulnerabilities if they decide a clear commitment to the policy of the United States. This explains the attitude of certain European

countries that were not inclined to support the United States activities in some crisis situations, presenting a resistance to allowing the Americans free use of the military installations established for a different purpose.

In summary, the increment of the Soviet military capability in the Mediterranean adds a component of complexity to the solution of possible conflicts in the basin, reinforcing the risks of a military confrontation.

Soviet policy gives priority to the political ties, and even to the supply of military resources. Countries with irredentist orientation have created conflicts with the west and Arab states for different reasons. Syria, Lybia and moderate Algeria, are the main examples.

Moscow intends to utilize tensions in the area to support its purpose, to play a more important role in the zone by demonstrating that the local conflicts cannot be solved without Soviet cooperation and participation. However, the alliance of Moscow with the radical Arab countries is certainly a risk, because it presents the possibility of becoming involved in a conflict with other powers in the region or from outside. Soviet behavior during the crisis of Lybia suggests that Moscow is considering the avoidance of such eventualities.

But not only U.S. and USSR have a relevant influence in the Mediterranean. From the cultural perspective, the Mare Nostrum appears as an exceptional witness of the dialogue between the three religions-cultures born in it: the Christian, the Muslim and the Jewish. Probably the rise of islamism has been the biggest surprise during the past years. The renaissance of the concept "Islam" is a very complex process that cannot be viewed as "black and white." It is a diplomatic challenge to the west as a rejection of the intent to modernize the Arab world. This is not a new process; it has been developing for more than sixty years. In it have participated the

national bourgeoisies that intended a synthesis between tradition and technological and political advances (the Wafd in Egypt, the Destour in Tunisia or the Istiqlal in Morocco). Although some symptoms of fundamentalism have appeared not only in Egypt, but in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco as well, they do not represent a real threat to the West.

On the other hand, when the appearance of fundamentalism, as in Iran, implies the rupture of a political situation, it does not necessarily mean an antagonism toward the west and an approach to the east block. On the contrary, from an east-west global perception, if U.S. supported regimes fall, it is also true that the fundamentalism is a formidable barrier against the penetration of marxism.

In this environment, what role does Spain play? To begin with, it represents together with the axis Balearic-Gibraltar-Canaries, a country bridge between the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

This zone of Spanish geography has been and is vital to the west, and of course the most valuable strategic area of Spain. The Gibraltar Strait is the narrow sea-strip between the Rock and Tarifa in the north and Ceuta and Tanger in the south. To be strong in the Strait, it is necessary to be strong not only in those points but in the land, sea and air spaces in the vicinity and probably some hundred miles away.

Spain needs an influence in this key area to protect its own land and to contribute with the western countries to deter the common threat.

The Alboran Sea, zone of Gibraltar and Gulf of Cadiz define the so-called center of gravity of the strategic and particular interests of Spain. By projecting its power into the Strait, Spain secures the integrity of Ceuta and Melilla against any threat coming from the Morocco government or a future triumph of islamic-revolutionary movements in North Africa. Therefore, the

south flank of NATO will be reinforced. So far there has been a discontinuity that hampered the command possibilities, the commitment of reserves and the support of the battle.

If Spain regains the control of the Strait, its international image will improve, as well as the quality of relations with the United States. That should clearly demonstrate the contribution of the newest NATO member to the defense of the free world. France would be another beneficiary for its strategic interests are in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic, linked by the Strait. France requires the control of this area in the hands of a weak or allied nation with common interests under a strong bilateral relation.

From this review of the situation in the Mediterranean, some conclusions can be reached.

There is an open confrontation east-west, between the Soviet continental block and western-maritime coalition. The strategy of both blocks has been the constant in history. The continental, always in the east, intending a penetration toward the west, while the maritime powers have used a strategy of resistance. Since WW II, there is a new element, the Russian penetration in the Mediterranean in search of its old dream, a free access to the open seas, through two main axes, one on the sea, the second on the land. The maritime penetration begins in the Black Sea, and continues along the Aegean to the Central Mediterranean into the Western Mediterranean in order to link up with the Soviet North Atlantic Eskadra across the Gibraltar Strait.

This axis, is complemented with a land penetration oriented toward the Middle East and North Africa, with a double objective: the establishment of bases for its naval forces and to attack the south flank of Europe. The strategy has succeeded in Syria, Lybia and Algeria, but not in Egypt.

The western world has opposed a maritime contention, utilizing the 6th U.S. fleet, deployed in the Mediterranean in cooperation with the European NATO fleets and to fill the gap left by the departure of the British in 1950. In support of the 6th fleet are Spain and France with certain constraints (they are not members of NATO military structure) and the fleets of Italy, Greek and Turkey with a bigger commitment.

The main goals of this deployment are the contention of the Soviet presence in the area and control of maritime traffic, of capital importance to the western countries. The focal points in the basin are the Suez Channel and the Straits of Sicily and Gibraltar. In order to carry out its strategy, the west needs control of the focal points and general control of the whole area with special emphasis on the focal points.

The confrontation between north-south is another factor to bear in mind. In it we find basically a geoeconomic problem, with ideological, ethnic, religious and cultural components. Although the confrontations north-south are not so intense as the east-west, they are usually more touchy and confused, with a tendency to destabilize the equilibrium in its area of influence through low intensity conflicts and terrorist actions. We cannot forget that the Mediterranean has the highest rate of terrorism in the world.

To summarize, the strategy of the western world has to be focused in the following missions:

- o To control Soviet penetration of the maritime space and the land approach through the Middle East and North Africa.
- o To protect free navigation.
- o To control the focal points, specially the Gibraltar Strait.
- o To maintain and increase stability in the Middle East and North Africa.

Spain and the Mediterranean

Throughout history Spain has been always present in the Mediterranean, being the superpower of the area during the 16th and 17th centuries, after the Turkish defeat (1571) in the battle of Lepanto. Its influence was decreasing little by little at the same time its empire was vanishing. However the Spanish presence in the west, with the control of Gibraltar, is an element of equilibrium, reinforced by the possession of the Balearic and Canary islands, as well as the cities of Ceuta and Melilla to the south of the Strait, under the Spanish sovereignty since the end of the 15th century, hundreds of years before Morocco emerged as a new nation, according to the concept of International Law.

The integration of Spain into the NATO Alliance adds a new dimension to the general situation in the area previously depicted. The problems and conflicts affecting Spain become a part of the questions affecting the area as a totality.

From this perspective, the role of Spain in the West Mediterranean, must be placed in a wider view about the global environment.

The areas of Spanish interest are focused in two points.

- o West Mediterranean, especially the Maghreb and the old Spanish Sahara conflict that are closely interrelated.

- o East Mediterranean, especially the Middle East and Greek-Turkish conflicts.

The Maghreb

The Maghreb is a key scenario to Spain for political, economic and security reasons. The issues of Ceuta and Melilla, energy, fishing, and the Maghreb as a frontier with the Arab countries and the Third World illustrate Spanish concern about this geographical space.

The Spanish policy in the Maghreb has been defined by the President of the Government as a policy of "jointness and not of balance, of cooperation and not of confrontation and of noninterference in the internal affairs of the countries." There is a will to change the previous political approaches from a position of "balance," to a future policy of globality, understanding the area as a whole.

Although the Old Spanish Sahara is not located in the area, the problems derived from it affect Spain-Morocco relations.

The Spanish decision to withdraw from the Sahara, was announced to the U.N. Secretary General on February 26, 1976. Spain ended its presence as the administrator power on the West Sahara territory. Spain stated that its mission would not be finished until the Saharais expressed their free will about their political future through the right to a fair referendum, according to the different resolutions of the U.N. and OUA (Organization for the Unity of Africa). The referendum was to be held before December 21, 1983. However, Morocco has ignored these resolutions arguing that they are only "recommendations."

The Polisario Front, with Algerian support, has tried to get through arms what could not be gotten through diplomatic channels. Morocco rejects the possibility of a direct negotiation with the Polisario while it is succeeding in the struggle, stopping the penetration of Polisario forces by building a set of defensive walls.

Spain is firmly decided to support and cooperate in any peaceful solution to the conflict, based on the right to autodetermination of the Saharais and with the guarantees requested of the U.N. and OUA. Meanwhile Spain will avoid any posture that can prejudice the development or the solution of the decolonization process.

Besides the Sahara, the dispute between Spain and Morocco is centered in the Spanish territories in North Africa (cities of Ceuta and Melille, the Alboran Island and the Rocks of Alhucemas and Velez). The Spanish people for historical reasons are very sensitive about this question. Morocco's demands are present right now and will come up from time to time. But Morocco is not willing to confront Spain, and now less than ever, due to its relative international isolation. The problem of course is between Spain and Morocco, but with implications for the balance of the area.

The superpowers will never allow the development of a crisis in such a critical area; neither will they permit the dominion of one state over the two banks of the Strait (assuming Spain recovers Gibraltar). Therefore, the United States would be in trouble, in case of crisis, due to its good relations with both countries.

Morocco has the support of the Arabs and the Third World. The acceptance of the great Maghreb could be an element of consensus among the neighbors.

Morocco probably will not bring the problem to the U.N. (where it has been frozen since 1975), because the Decolonization Committee disapproves the presence of Moroccan Forces in the West Sahara, and Morocco will not bring the situation to the International Courts because they know that the nature of the conflict cannot be supported by International Law.

The Spanish population living in both cities, the historical titles dating from late in the 15th century, and the various treaties regarding frontiers, are the political and legal reasons supporting the Spanish position. Furthermore, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Spain, in one of its final dispositions, recognizes specifically the Spanish nature of Ceuta and Melilla as a part of the national territory.

Nobody can deny the value of the resolutions in favor of Morocco, dictated in other international organizations, such as the Arab League, Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, etc., but there are some facts to consider in relation with them:

- o They are political, not legal issues.
- o Their position is supported on the principle of territorial integrity, forgetting that this is an argument also utilized by the Spanish negotiators.
- o Finally, Morocco brings the issue to international forums where Spain is not a member and besides that without any competence in the dispute.

As for the future evolution, nobody knows what is going to happen, although some assumptions can be made, based on the existing facts.

Having in mind the international situation of Morocco, with the Sahara conflict and the Atlantic tendency of its foreign policy, it does not seem logical to make a direct and urgent demand for Ceuta and Melilla. That would open a new front, and a new conflict in such a sensitive area and would provoke a frontal confrontation with Spain and a serious international crisis. Probably Morocco will keep its demands "on ice," though some political parties, mass media, local associations, etc., will press the claims. Even King Hassan from time to time makes remarks calling for a friendly and peaceful solution.

In spite of the issues--the Sahara and the Spanish territories in North Africa--relations between Spain and Morocco are generally good, with the normal ups and downs, many times covering from the internal situation in Morocco. The reasons to hope for normal relations now and in the future are:

- o Personal friendship of both kings.

- o The success of the Spanish Presidential trip in 1983, that accomplished the desired objective of opening a new personal channel of communication with King Hussan II.

- o Frequent talks of the Foreign Affairs Ministers.

- o The increasing international isolation of Morocco, as a result of the crisis in the Sahara, counseling them to keep correct relations with the few Allies and friendly countries they still enjoy.

- o The weakness of the Moroccan economy and the exterior deficit, making it fully dependent upon the international credits in general and those of Spain in particular, agreed in the "Fishing Agreements," signed between the two countries.

Algeria

The relationship between Spain and Algeria has a different pattern. It can be defined as smooth, although some frictions exist. Some disagreement is the consequence of several factors derived from the different approaches of both nations to their common interests as evidenced in:

- o Ideological differences.

- o Algerian policy is Third World oriented.

- o Open support to the Polisario in the West Saharan conflict.

- o Algerian support in the past to terrorist or Separatist movements against the integrity of Spain.

- o Distrust of Algeria because of the good relations of Spain with Morocco and the close alignment with the United States and the Western World.

In spite of these problems there are no territorial demands, because with the exception of the 16th century, Spain never was the colonial power in Algeria as it was in Morocco. For this reason Algeria is not a potential threat to Spain from the military or political standpoint. In addition, the

present regime comes from a revolution that has evolved with coherence, and it seems to be firmly settled. Despite internal disputes, the future of its relations with Spain is positive. The stability of the system contrasts with Morocco, where the risk of a revolution is still present.

Algeria is the chief importer of Spanish goods in the whole African Continent. More than 6,000 Spaniards work in the country for several Spanish Corporations dealing mainly with construction and public works, such as the construction of highway, dumps, etc. Both countries recently signed an important contract, that states the Spanish compromise to import natural gas from Algeria, helping to establish a fair import-export balance.

Spain is very interested in the maintenance and even improvement of the present status and to avoid any possible confrontation. Algeria openly helped the Separatist movement of Canary Island, giving support to its leaders (in fact 30 of them are still living in Algeria), and providing shelter and training to the Basque terrorists.

Looking at the future, it would be useful to find new fields of common interests, such as a close cooperation in the Mediterranean Security, military matters, technological interchange, etc.

Tunisia

Spain and Tunisia are enjoying a very close friendship, although without a clear definition of their common objectives. This friendship was born in 1956 when Tunisia achieved independence, reinforcing the Spanish ties with the Arab countries in general and with those in North Africa in particular.

In the last four years, there is a growing concern in Spain about Tunisia, stimulated by the economic crisis and the need for new markets. The initiative has been very well received in the Republic due to its interest in

widening the economic and political relationships, breaking in part its excessive dependence from France.

It suits Spain, while it is possible, to support the current stability and evolution of its neighbor, according to the present tendency of the Tunisian leaders toward the Western World. Tunisia has always supported the Spanish theory about Canary Islands, being one of the first African countries clearly recognizing the archipelago as a part of Spain. It has also endorsed the Spanish demands on Gibraltar in all International Forums. Hence, the foundations for a close cooperation and understanding are established.

Lybia

Since Spain decided upon withdrawal from the Sahara, the quality of the relations between Spain and Lybia has improved and is stable, considering the activism and unpredictable behavior of the Lybian leader. Both countries maintain good commercial relations. Lybia has the energy that Spain needs and the economic resources to import without restriction the goods and services that Spain can provide, although those resources are decreasing because of the low prices of oil and the senseless economic policy of the Lybian government. The activism of this country can endanger relations with Spain due to hints about the cooperation and economic support to some Canarian separatist elements and to the Basque terrorism.

Because the past Lybian-British crisis and the charges against the Lybia Popular Office in Madrid, Spain immediately restrained the entrance of Lybian citizens into the country.

Spanish public opinion in the recent conflict of that country with the United States was divided. The government maintained a position of silence that must be understood in the light of the Spanish desire to maintain its present status with Lybia and not as condemnation of the American action.

However the continuous problems with its African neighbors, the internal instability of the Republic, the growing isolation from the Arabic World and the majority of the African Nations, suggest the difficulty from the Spanish standpoint to accommodate its bilateral relations with this country. Maintaining a pragmatic policy in economics while avoiding any kind of political implications that could be interpreted as a support of Lybian adventurism are Spanish policy objectives.

Spain and Maghreb in the Future

The policy of Spain in this area during the last ten years has evolved from a situation of equilibrium with all the Maghreb countries to a second stage in which the Spanish diplomacy has focused mainly in Morocco.

Both approaches have pros and cons. The equilibrium supposed a lack of credibility for Spain and was interpreted as a lack of interest in establishing a long-term cooperation.

Excessive commitment to Morocco is not desirable, because the relations with Algeria could encumber the economic interchange and the Canarian problem. On the other hand a closer approach to Algeria would increase the problems with Morocco, especially in the issues of fishing permits, Ceuta and Melilla.

The Spanish policy has to be based on mutual confidence while avoiding a full commitment with its neighbors in the south.

It is necessary in the future to build a real structure to support the mutual interests and strive for cooperation with every country in the area, avoiding the defensive attitude that Spain has usually maintained. The Spanish integration in the European community is a positive step, allowing Spain to be natural bridge linking the Maghreb and European nations.

In summary, the Spanish policy in the area must be oriented to the establishment of close ties with all the countries in North Africa while avoiding favoring any of them in particular.

A strong and stable Maghreb can have a positive impact in Spain giving more autonomy to its policy in the area and diminishing the possibilities of influence by the superpowers. However an excessive alignment of the Maghrebies, with a closer relation Morocco-Algeria could increase the tension in Ceuta, Melilla and Canary Islands.

Spain and the East Mediterranean

The policy of approach and friendship with the Arab World began in the late 1940's and was developed during the 50's. The reasons to establish strong ties with those countries was a consequence of the Spanish international isolation due to its support to Germany and Italy during WW II. Although as early as 1948 Spain tried to establish diplomatic relations with the just born Israeli state, the Jews rejected the proposal arguing the totalitarian character of the Spanish regime and its past alignment with the Axis Powers. This lack of relations with Israel was a constant in Spanish foreign policy until 1986, when the decision to open embassies in Tel Aviv and Madrid was agreed by both countries.

Friendship with the Arabs has been beneficial for Spain from the political side, for Spain could support them in international forums despite conflicts of Spain with other Arab countries. The Arab community has been on the Muslim side. However, it must be clarified that this posture is a definition of pro-Arab feelings rather than anti-Spanish.

In all the Arab-Israeli crises Spain has always supported the Arabic position.

From the economic standpoint, the relation between the political friendship and the economic benefits that Spain has obtained are not proportional, probably because of the strong international competition and the lack of aggressiveness by the Spanish businessmen more oriented to Europe and North Africa.

Regarding the Palestinian problem, the Spanish position has been to support a just, global and lasting solution, in which the Palestinian people have a voice. Spain never has recognized the annexation of the territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war, believing that there is no future in the area unless the national rights of the Palestinians are fully respected.

The problem of Lebanon has been followed by the different Spanish governments with real interest. In the summer of 1982 during the Security Council meeting, the Spanish delegation developed an important activity in cooperation with the other members of the council, intending to stop the fight and get a negotiated peace. At the same time Spain offered to send troops as part of the multilateral force, but the proposal was rejected by Israel arguing the lack of diplomatic relations with Spain.

This policy has been very well received by the different Arab countries in the area (Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria). Spain believes that the peace, unity and sovereignty of Lebanon has to be preserved as well as its characteristics as a multiracial and multireligious society. The Lebanese model must reappear as the example of a peaceful coexistence that it was throughout history.

The Greek-Turk conflict in Cyprus is a difficult issue for Spain. Both countries are friends and allies. Spain is interested in maintaining current good relations. Its attitude is of neutrality although Spain never recognized the "Turkish Republic of North Cyprus," disapproving the interchange of

ambassadors between that "Republic" and Turkey, because in the Spanish appreciation this is a step away from the solution to the crisis. For these reasons the government of Spain has not expressed an official opinion. Only if a constitutional referendum and free elections were held would Spain openly define its position.

The Western Countries in the Mediterranean

This paper would be incomplete without a final reference to the Western Powers in the area and their relations with Spain.

France. After the victory of the right-coalition in the French elections of 1986, a curious phenomenon has happened in this country: the coexistence of a leftist-socialist President of the nation with a rightist Prime Minister.

Although with the normal political differences between both coalitions in monetary and social policy, there is an important agreement in the struggle against terrorism and the need to stop inflation.

France has been for many years the logistic base and sanctuary for the Spanish terrorist group, ETA. The infrastructure of the organization was in the southwest Basque-France region. This area has been the shelter of the leaders and activists of the terrorist band for a long time. The multiple mountain passes through the Pyrenees in the area allowed the movement back and forth of the different groups, making very difficult the detection and watch over of these movements. In this way the terrorist organization enjoyed a situation of privilege from which to launch terrorist actions in the interior of Spain, knowing that they had their back protected. However, during the last two years, as a result of the Spanish pressures and the improvement of relations between both governments, the product of multiple bilateral talks, French cooperation has shifted 180 degrees. The Basque region in France is no longer a safe haven for terrorists, and the organization has been almost

dismantled, thanks to the open cooperation of the police and the courts of our neighbors.

The relations between the armed forces of both countries are excellent, with frequent meetings of the respective general staffs, and interchange of units. Several combined maneuvers and exercises in Spain as well as in France are conducted every year with outstanding results that contribute to a better understanding of both nations after years of mutual isolation.

There are still some shadows on the horizon. France was very reluctant to accept Spanish integration in the Common Market because of the negative impact on the economy of the French farmers. The quality and the price of the agricultural products (fruits and vegetables) and Spanish wine, pose an important threat to French exports to the rest of the Community. However, France finally voted in favor of the Spanish integration, although with some restrictions to the free trade of the Spanish products during the first five years.

In spite of these problems the future of relations is brilliant. Spain, following its policy of diversifying the acquisition of defense materiel, has become an important customer of the French war industry, establishing several programs of cooperation and cofabrication of high technology equipment that will enhance the quality of the Spanish products in the future. The MBT AMX-30, made and improved in Spain, the Milan and Roland missiles, Mirage aircraft and Super-Puma helicopter, are a few examples of the close cooperation between both nations.

Further, France has succeeded in its fight against inflation. At the end of 1986 it was only 2.1 percent, the lowest since 1964.

French relations with the Arab countries have improved with the arrival of Mr. Mitterand. This was demonstrated by the presence of French forces in the Lebanese crisis and the support in the Chadian conflict.

In the future it seems that France will continue its foreign policy of equilibrium, intending to perform the role of leader in the area and, when possible, in Europe, independent from the two superpowers.

Italy. Italy is the best example in Europe of an economy in continuous progression, based on the quality of its products, the imagination of its businessmen, and the consistency of national economic policy.

Its internal problems, terrorism and separatist tendencies in Sardinia, in spite of the traditional instability of the different governments, have been almost overcome.

The relations between Spain and Italy are exceptional. The Italian government has shown an open support of Spain, especially in Europe. Again and following the Spanish policy of technological interchange with foreign countries, the Italian-Spanish relations are in a process of continuous improvement.

The international policy rests in the following points:

- o Firm Europeanism. Italy is together with Germany, the most decided defender of the European economic and political integration.
- o Atlanticism, as demonstrated in the tendency to confirm tight ties with the United States.
- o Fair relations with the European Eastern countries (mainly in the industrial and economic fields and less in the political).
- o Excellent relations with Ibero-America based on its large migrations to those countries, complemented by cultural and economic interchange.

Italy is a basic element in maintaining the balance in the zone, looking for the improvement of its role as mediator between the east and west, as well as among the developing countries. Its orientation has been and remains clearly Mediterranean, intending to maintain the difficult equilibrium between its European and Mediterranean policy, as happened in the recent crisis in Lybia.

As an active member of the Atlantic Alliance, Italy openly supports the presence of the U.S. 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean, providing installations in the south of the country for the necessary facilities for the operations of the American Navy in the area.

The Mediterranean in the Future: Final Conclusions

The Mediterranean throughout history has been a western sea, especially since the Turkish defeat in the Gulf of Lepanto in 1571, by the Spanish fleet.

Today the control of its waters is a matter of dispute between the east and the west. The economic, political, social and religious asymmetries between the rich and industrialized countries of the north and the agricultural and poor nations in the south, is another consequence that appears when the area is studied.

Research conducted by the Spanish Defense Studies Center suggest possibilities of conflict in the zone are of 64 percent, with 24 points of confrontation, mainly in the Middle East, Balkans and the Maghreb (Figure 5). Since the end of WW II, the nations on both banks of the Mediterranean have been involved in multiple conflicts (Figure 6).

From the military point of view, the Mediterranean can be easily overflown by modern aircraft based on land in a short period of time. The high technology in their weaponry and the accuracy of the navigation systems

allow them to arrive precisely on the different targets with a high probability of destruction.

Those critical points (Straits) can be controlled with submarines, mines and fast boats.

The special chemistry of the sea waters and the rough geography of the maritime bottom, are factors that play in favor of the submarines, making more difficult the detection and the fight against them.

Besides the former considerations, the new sea-land anti-ship missiles with ranges up to 200 kilometers, have reduced the size of the Mediterranean, speaking in geostrategic terms.

This analysis should not be complete without an appraisal of the armed forces in the area.

With respect to the air forces the facts to consider are:

- o Quantitative and qualitative improvement in the Arab countries and the Middle East.
- o Predominance of aircraft with air-ground attack capability over interceptors.
- o The investment in air force material is higher than in warships, probably because a powerful aviation represents better the power of the states (Figure 7).

The different types and characteristics of the aircraft are shown in figure 8. Most of them are equipped with air-air and air-surface missiles.

The trends in the naval forces are:

- o Increases in the number of submarines.
- o Increases in the acquisition and building of multipurpose, highly sophisticated frigates.

o Substantial increment in light units (corvets and fast boats) with missile launching capability.

None of these ships is very expensive, and they could be used in multiple missions, such as patrolling, control and coast guard in territorial waters as well as to attack naval formations, denying and endangering free traffic, but they are very vulnerable to air attacks, and the possibility of navigation in rough waters is small. Because of their characteristics they would normally be employed close to the coast under the protection of their own air forces, which assumes air superiority. Figure 9 shows a summary of current naval materiel in the Mediterranean countries.

To evaluate the land forces in the area is a difficult task, but there is a great diversity in type and organization of units, equipment, tactical and strategic doctrine, etc. Figure 10 depicts the existing relation between the land forces and the other services.

After WW II, the scope of the Mediterranean changed radically. The old Mare Nostrum, controlled by the European powers for centuries saw how interested the United States and the USSR were in the assignment of their respective fleets in its waters.

Russia had never had free access to the Mediterranean. The linkage of the Black Sea Fleet and the Atlantic Eskadra was not possible unless a continuous presence of the Soviet Navy was established in the Mediterranean. According to the Treaty of Montreux, this was possible only depending on the good will of Turkey, that controls the key Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits. The USSR maintained the thesis that they were a Mediterranean country by considering the Black Sea as an appendix of the Mediterranean.

President Truman asked the Congress in 1947 to provide economic and material support to Turkey and Greece in order to protect them from Soviet

penetration toward the southern waters. In 1949, different American corporations appeared in the Middle East to exploit the oil fields, and with them the first units of the 6th Fleet began navigation in the Mediterranean. The creation of NATO in 1949 and the integration of Greece and Turkey in 1952, along with the United States-Spain Treaty in 1953, permitted the use of the allied facilities to the 6th Fleet, covering the Mediterranean from east to west.

However, the open support of the United States to the new state of Israel pushed many Arab countries to accept an alliance with the Soviets. Little by little Moscow increased its power and control over the Mediterranean. The Lybian and Algerian installations, besides the bases of Alexandria and Latakia in Syria, provided the necessary support to the Russians.

The death of Nasser was the turning point for the Egyptian policy, Egypt decided to expel the Soviets. Since then the 20 warships and about 25 auxiliary ships of the Soviet Union, can only use the Port of Latakia in Syria, cruising usually the coasts of Syria, Tartus, Marseille and Almeria, although they enjoy some port facilities in South Greece for maintenance purposes. Day by day, nevertheless, the Soviet activity in the Mediterranean is increasing. International Law requires submarines to cross the straits on the surface, but this principle is constantly violated by the Russians who use the coverage of merchant ships to pass under them through the straits.

The Soviet economic support to the countries in the area pursues political success, but disregards economic results. The special idiosyncrasy of the Arabs and their distrust toward the old colonial powers, and the many mistakes of western policy has facilitated the Soviet penetration in the area.

The United States intends to counterbalance the Russian influence by supporting a pacific solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict through

negotiations between the different states. (The Agreements of Camp David are a good example.)

In spite of this effort, the never ending Lebanese war put the United States in a touchy situation. On one side is the moral obligation that the Americans feel to support Israel; on the other hand the will to achieve and maintain the peace and the order in the zone, supporting all kind of peaceful initiatives. Without the solution of the Palestinian problem and the international acceptance of the Israeli state in a pacific atmosphere, the stability in the Mediterranean is an unlikely utopia.

For the near future, tensions will be a constant factor endangering any optimistic assessment. There are many factors in the area to support this unhappy conclusion:

- o The Mediterranean is the main way of communication between the countries on the north and south shores.

- o The Mediterranean is a maritime hallway integrated in the great routes of the world navigation.

- o This zone constitutes the south flank of NATO and the exit of WP to temperate waters.

- o The Mare Nostrum is the natural boundary between two different cultures and civilizations.

The Mediterranean summarizes the rivalry between the two superpowers and the north-south antagonism between the rich industrialized countries of Europe and the North Africans who are poor but owners of raw materials and resources essential to the developed nations.

The future of the Mediterranean depends on its own nations, on their ability to overcome extreme nationalistic positions and to solve among them the common problems, rejecting excessive foreign interventionism. The

European countries in the area can contribute to these solutions, through a real support in order to speed up the social, cultural, economic and technological development of the nations that need it.

ENDNOTES

1. Source: Informe Desarrollo Mundial (B. Mundial).
2. Source: (Banco Mundial and E.I.U.).

POPULATION - 1986

	(millions) POPULATION	%	(thousands Km2) AREA	%
CYPRUS	0.657	0.18	9	
SPAIN	38.7	11.02	505	5.92
FRANCE	54.9	15.64	547	6.41
GREECE	9.9	2.82	132	1.54
ITALY	57	16.23	301	3.52
MALTA	0.36	0.10	0.316	3.70
TURKEY	48.4	13.78	781	
	209.917	59.80	2,275.316	26.67
ALBANIA	2.9	0.82	29	0.33
YUGOSLAVIA	23	6.35	256	3
	25.9	7.37	285	3.34
ALGIERS	21.2	0.05	2,382	27.92
MOROCCO	21.4	6.09	447	5.24
TUNISIA	7	1.99	164	1.92
LYBIA	3.5	0.99	1,760	20.63
	53.1	15.12	4,753	55.72
EGYPT	45.9	13.07	1,001	11.73
ISRAEL	4.2	1.19	21	0.24
LEBANON	2.635	0.75	10	0.11
SYRIA	10.1	0.87	185	2.16
	62.835	17.90	1,217	14.26
TOTAL	351.782		8,530.316	

Sources:
Report on the World
Development, 1986.
The European Year
Book, 1986.

Figure 2

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

COUNTRY	MALES	FEMALES
CYPRUS	322,600	326,000
SPAIN	18,491,487	19,191,168
FRANCE	26,624,300	27,721,700
GREECE	4,580,550	4,818,780
ITALY	27,219,390	28,713,150
MALTA	259,923	169,276
TURKEY	22,695,362	22,041,595

ALBANIA	1,466,000	1,375,000
YUGOSLAVIA	14,406,828	11,363,947

ALGIERS	9,893,262	9,963,744
MOROCCO	9,405,000	9,389,000
TUNISIA	3,297,400	3,268,100
LYBIA	1,191,853	1,057,384

EGYPT	18,647,289	17,987,946
ISRAEL	2,011,590	2,026,030
LEBANNON	1,080,015	1,046,310
SYRIA	4,748,046	4,546,958

USA	114,765,000	121,393,000
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Source:
Almanaque Mundial, 1986.

COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT ZONES

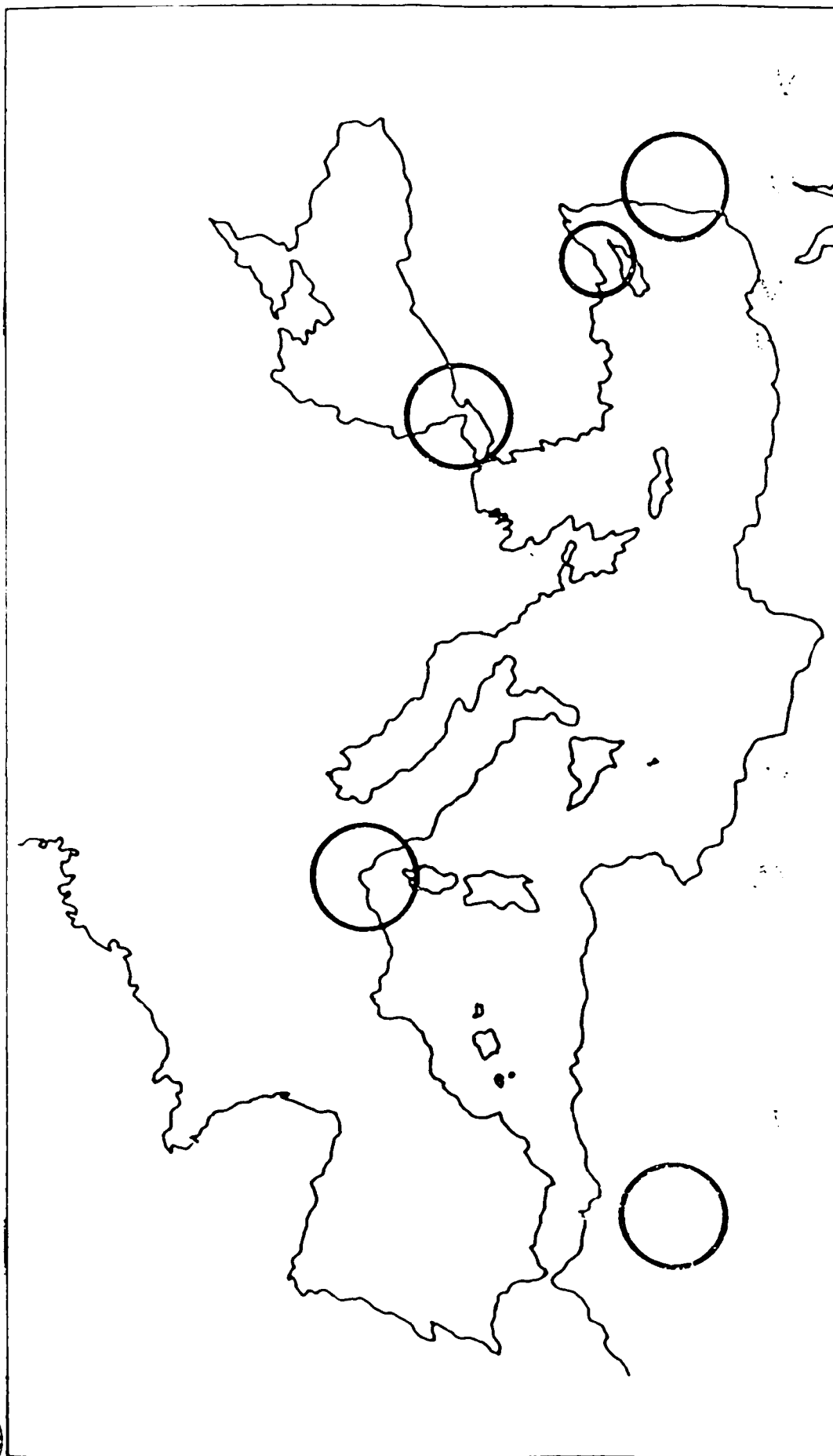
<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>MED. NATIONS</u>	<u>AFRICA</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>URSS</u>	<u>EUROPE</u>
AREA KM2	8,530,316	30,300,000	9,363,498	22,402,200	10,000,000
POPULATION	351,752,000	537,000,000	234,496,000	272,500,000	766,000,000
DENSITY KM2	41.2	17.7	25.0	12.1	76.6

Source:
Report of the World Bank, 1986.

Figure 4

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA: AREAS OF CONFLICT

Figure 5



CONFLICTS AND ARMED ACTIONS IN THE REGION SINCE WWII

Figure 6

	ESPAÑA	FRANCIA	ITALIA	YUGOSLAVIA	ALBANIA	GRECIA	TURQUIA	CHIPRE	SIRIA	LIBANO	ISRAEL	EGIPTO	LIBIA	MALTA	TUNEZ	ARGELIA	MARRUECOS	OTROS
ESPAÑA																		
FRANCIA																		
ITALIA																		
YUGOSLAVIA																		
ALBANIA																		
GRECIA						X	X											
TURQUIA						X												
CHIPRE							X											
SIRIA								X										
LIBANO										2	5							
ISRAEL									5	5	6							2
EGIPTO											6		X					
LIBIA												X			X			3
MALTA																		
TUNEZ		X										X						
ARGELIA		X															X	
MARRUECOS	2																X	
OTROS											2				3			

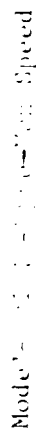


EVOLUTION OF AIR POWER - COMBAT AIRCRAFT

COUNTRY	1973	1986	INCREASE (%)
SPAIN	187	177	-5
FRANCE	706	475	-32
ITALY	330	315	-4
ALBANIA	104	100	-4
YUGOSLAVIA	312	420	35
GREECE	225	314	39
TURKEY	288	368	28
SYRIA	210	500	138
LEBANNON	21	7	-66
ISRAEL	488	684	40
EGYPT	523	427	-18
LYBIA	109	535	390
TUNISIA	12	20	66
ALGIERS	180	332	84
MOROCCO	60	105	75

Sources:
 Spanish CGSC
 An Essay 1985
 Military Balance
 1985-86-87

Figure 7



Source:

Spain CGSC An Essay, 1985.

Figure 8

COMBAT AIRCRAFT CHARACTERISTICS



Countries	Aircraft carriers	Helicopter carriers	Cruisers	Destroyers	Frigates	Corvets	Fast Boats MSL's	Fast Boats	Patrol Boats	Miners	Mine Sweepers	Tankers	Log. Support Boats	Amphib. Assault	Landing Crafts	Landing Ships	Submarines
ESPAÑA		1		11	15	4		12	18		12	1		2	29	4	8
FRANCIA	3		1	19	25		10		3		23	6	6	6	15	4	18
ITALIA		1	2	4	16	8	7				4	2			19	2	10
YUGOSLAVIA					2	3	16	14	18		14				24		7
ALBANIA								50	4		9						4
GRECIA				14	7		16	15			17				13	8	10
TURQUIA				12	6		9	16	29	7	26	9	3		62	6	16
SIRIA					2		22	8	1		1				2		
LIBANO									4								
ISRAEL						6	25								6		3
EGIPTO				3	7		30	32	30	30	12					16	14
LIBIA					1	8	25		5	1	7		1		23	2	6
TUNEZ					1		6	2	5								
ARGELIA					3	4	11	6		1					1	2	2
MARRUECOS					1		4	2	4						3	1	

Source: Military Balance 1985-86-87.

Figure 9

NAVAL FORCES IN THE REGION



Country	TOTAL AF's Thousands	% Profes.	Army Thousands	% AF's	% Profes.	Navy Thousands	% AF's	% Profes.	Air Force Thousands	% AF's	% Profes.
ESPAÑA	366,8	33,1	267,6	72,9	15,6	57,7	15,7	21,7	41,4	11,3	30,8
FRANCIA	476,6	48,5	300	63	37	67,7	14,2	73,5	96,5	20,3	62,2
ITALIA	385,1	33	270	70,1	24,1	44,5	11,5	44,7	70,6	18,3	59,9
YUGOSLAVIA	241	36,1	191	79,2	26,7	13	5,4	53,8	37	15,3	78,4
ALBANIA	40,4	44,5	30	74,2	33,3	3,2	7,9	68,7	7,2	17,8	80,5
GRECIA	201,5	34,5	158	78,4	33,5	19,5	9,6	38,5	24	11,9	31,2
TURQUIA	630	12,4	520	82,5	8,6	55	8,7	23,6	55	8,7	36,4
SIRIA	402,5	?	330	81,9	50	2,5	0,6	?	70	17,4	?
LIBANO	17,4	?	16	91,9	?	0,3	1,7	?	1	5,7	?
ISRAEL	142	?	104	73,2	15,4	10	7	67	28	19,7	92,8
EGIPTO	445	43	320	71,9	43,7	20	4,5	50	25	5,6	60
LIBIA	73	?	58	79,4	?	6,5	8,9	?	8,5	11,6	?
TUNEZ	35,1	23,1	30	85,5	13,3	2,6	7,4	80,7	2,5	7,1	80
ARGELIA	170	41,1	150	88,2	33,3	8	4,7	?	12	7	?
MARRUECOS	149	?	130	87,2	?	6	4	?	13	8,7	?

AF's: Armed Forces

Source: Spain CGSC An Essay 1985.

Figure 10.

DISTRIBUTION OF FORCES: ET/ARMY. F.N./NAVY. F.A./AIR FORCES

END

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